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NSC Review Completed.

28 November 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting on Southeast Asia, 1100 hours, 28 November

1. All Principals were present except Mr. Ball and Mr. McCone. General Carter represented Mr. McCone.

2. Prior to the meeting, General Wheeler pointed out that the Joint Chiefs of Staff felt strongly as a body that the MIG's and the POL should be taken out first prior to any commencement of a long-range program. Likewise, Secretary Rusk pointed out that the President was quite disturbed about what appeared to be continuing leaks of policy discussions. Secretary Rusk enjoined everyone present not to talk to the Press in any way nor to give any backgrounders. In other words, we must assiduously avoid any press contacts.

3. Papers were handed out as follows:

Tab A - Subject: "Scenario for Immediate Action Program."
(Prepared by Bundy Working Group.)

Tab B - "Draft Statement to GVN." (Prepared by General Taylor)

Tab C - "Military Annex." (Prepared by Mr. McNaughton)

Tab D - List of Questions (Prepared by General Taylor)

4. Secretary Rusk pointed out that although planners and operators wanted decisions to cover periods several months in advance, we must be careful not to back the President into any such corner and to give him maximum flexibility on a decision-by-decision basis as events occurred.

5. Mac Bundy pointed out this would be difficult but we must be sure that the President was alerted to all problems that he would have to face up to whether or not they might occur in the light of subsequent events.

NAVY review(s) completed.

JCS review(s) completed.

DOS & OSD review(s)

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6. General Taylor pointed out that he was much encouraged over events in the past 24 hours as indicative that the Huong government seemed to be getting its feet on the ground. He stated that his proposed statement to the GVN would be made initially on a Top Secret basis and only to Huong Suu, Vien, and Khahn. Bundy said Taylor's statement should be so phrased that the GVN would know that if they did certain things then we would follow by doing certain things, and that the opt was ours, not theirs. Likewise, we should put a time schedule on accomplishment of those things we wanted GVN to do.

7. Rusk was hesitant about any calling of a leadership meeting because of the high-noise level it would raise prior to the convening of Congress and would create many problems. He stated that the President had ruled against General Taylor seeing any of the Congressional leadership (except Senator Humphrey) until after the President had made his decisions, probably next week.

8. McNamara said we must take care of the critical problem of how we surface the new developments on infiltration since this could be a political bomb shell. Wheeler pointed out that he understood Phoumi was coming to this country before too long and hoped to make a speech before the UN on infiltration.

9. Rusk said that the UN would probably meet long enough to appoint a committee to study Article 19 and then to report to the Assembly, and therefore Assembly activities would probably be pushed over into March, and there might not even be an Assembly if the Article 19 matter is not cleared up.

10. Mac Bundy said we must make it clear to the President exactly what our plans are and spell out clearly what the first month's activities would be under these plans. He stated that the President had discussed the various options and was generally familiar with them. Wheeler insisted that the President be informed that the JCS opted for much faster, harder action and unanimously so, but they would, of course, do whatever the President decided.

11. There was then discussion of greater participation by "other flags," specifically on the part of the Philippines, and the Australians, and possibly New Zealand, with more support from Thailand. These would be in the form of combat advisors or possibly even small combat units. McNamara said he wanted no Koreans and no Nationalist Chinese and that what he is really looking for is symbolic support, particularly under circumstances where some of these third country nationalists get wounded and killed as is happening to the United States every day.

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McNamara said he told Hasluck that the United States had no intention of going it alone in Southeast Asia and if the Australians did not help more they might find us withdrawing.

12. There was a general discussion of the need for constructing new permanent jet air fields, but the need was not validated and the JCS are making further studies. Taylor said he would prepare an annex to his paper indicating explicitly in detail just what we expected the GVN to do and the timetable on which it should be done. He mentioned such things as increases in armed forces, increased diplomatic representatives overseas, improved police forces, simplification of administration, removal of incompetents, etc., etc.

13. There was involved and lengthy discussion of the stoppage of flow of dependents as well as the removal of dependents presently in SVN. The various pros and cons were thrown back and forth and it was decided that this was a major policy decision which they were not yet prepared to consider.

14. A discussion then ensued of Tab C, Option C (Graduated Pressure) of the Military Annex. McNamara stated that the first four items would probably take place during the first 30 days. He also stated that the situation in SVN would not, in his opinion, remain stable in its present condition -- it either had to get better or would get worse, but we would not have the status quo. He also stated that if the DESOTO patrols were resumed (and there was much discussion of this) and they were attacked by air, he would propose to take out the air fields. General Taylor stated that there were three reasons for the DESOTO patrols, i. e., intelligence collection, assertion of our maritime rights, and to provoke incidents. We must weigh the advantages and timing in the light of all three of these reasons. (McNaughton mentioned the paper that he and the Joint Staff had prepared on the value of DESOTO patrols for intelligence collection. Several people mentioned that this was a fine study -- I was not familiar with it so made no comment.

15. The following decisions were made:

a. Five papers were to be prepared for the President as follows:

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- (1) The general concept
- (2) Actions during first 30 days
- (3) What to say to GVN
- (4) What to say to the public
- (5) What to say to third countries.

Bill

(Bundy undertook to work on all of these during the weekend with his staff.)

b. One man to work fulltime to prepare a report on infiltration and to get the Jordan report ready. The problem here is how to present both to the public. It was agreed that Chet Cooper would be assigned by Bundy to do this job.

c. Prior to Tuesday, the Principals should agree on the concept of Tab I of Military Annex, i.e., what type of reprisals would be used against what type of VC provocatives.

d. The next meeting would be at 11:00 a.m. on Monday and papers would be distributed by Bill Bundy as soon as they were completed.

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Marshall S. Carter
Lieutenant General, USA
Acting Director

MSC:hec

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